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VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 15th MEETING

Chairman:	Mr. RANA	(Nepal)
later:	Mr. MARTYNOV	(Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic)
later:	Mr. RANA	(Nepal)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

AGENDA ITEMS 45 TO 66 AND 155 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE ON ALL DISARMAMENT AGENDA ITEMS

Mr. BRAUTIGAM (Germany): Let me first congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on your election to this important office. I am convinced that your long diplomatic experience as the representative of your country in important international posts, not least since 1985 at the United Nations here in New York, will stand you in good stead in the discharge of your responsibilities. I am confident that under your guidance we shall be able to cope with the challenges facing us. I also extend congratulations to the other officers of the Committee.

The representative of Italy has already delivered a statement on behalf of the Twelve, which we fully endorse. I should like to add the following remarks in the name of my Government.

As a result of the spread of freedom and democracy in Europe, the situation in Germany has changed in an unexpectedly quick and very favourable manner. For the first time in the history of the United Nations, Germany is attending the General Assembly as a united country.

We owe deep gratitude to our friends and allies, in particular to President Bush, President Mitterrand and Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher for their contribution to German unity. We equally acknowledge that President Gorbachev created the pre-conditions vital for the unification of Europe and the unity of my country. We regard the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to him as a well-deserved recognition of his policy of reform, from which we also benefit.

I should also like to express my appreciation to the speakers who preceded me for their kind and positive remarks on German unity.

(Mr. Brautigam, Germany)

The united Germany will make its contribution towards stability in the whole of Europe. The renunciation of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons, reaffirmed only recently by Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher, and the legally binding commitment to limit our armed forces to a total of 370,000, including 345,000 land and air forces, lend increased credibility to our role in multilateral disarmament negotiations. Disarmament and arms control as well as the creation of co-operative security remain the keys to the pan-European house.

The end of East-West confrontation and the new relationship between the members of the two changing alliances pave the way for new co-operative security structures in this one Europe, where the post-war era has now ended. Thus, Europe is showing the way that might be followed, mutatis mutandis, by other regions of the world.

I noted with particular interest the carefully thought-out guidelines for the creation of co-operative security presented by the Canadian Secretary of State in his statement at a plenary meeting of this year's session of the General Assembly.

Since the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly we have made further substantial progress in disarmament and arms control. At the Vienna negotiations we anticipate the completion of the first phase in good time for the Paris Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) summit. We consider the uninterrupted continuation of the arms-control negotiations in Vienna - for the first time having the same participants and the same mandate - to be highly important, particularly from a German point of view, because they offer a forum for finding answers to the questions on arms control arising from the political changes in Europe.

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(Mr. Brautigam, Germany)

We welcome the significant headway made at the strategic arms reduction (START) negotiations. These negotiations, which are also in Germany's and Europe's interest, are strongly supported by my Government.

A convention providing for an effectively verifiable ban on chemical weapons remains a main objective of our disarmament policy. Given the propitious developments in other arms-control forums, we trust that the success considered long overdue by the international public will be achieved at the Geneva negotiations next year. The solution of the remaining problems at the political level should, after suitable preparation, be tackled as soon as possible.

It is gratifying to note that within a brief period we have made unexpectedly great progress in arms control and disarmament. Europe has proved that disarmament is possible. Germany will continue to do everything in its power to bring about a more peaceful and stable world. Active participation in disarmament and arms control is a central element of our foreign and security policy.

I should like to enlarge on the main disarmament efforts and achievements as seen by my Government. The conclusion next month of the first major disarmament agreement in Europe, CFE I, will be the point of departure for a fundamental reorientation of military security in Europe. The objective of the CFE negotiations is to establish a secure and stable balance of conventional forces at lower levels and to eliminate the capability for launching surprise attacks and initiating large-scale offensive actions. The CFE I agreement will be a first substantive step towards attaining this goal.

(Mr. Brautigam, Germany)

The parallel negotiations on confidence- and security-building measures offer a special opportunity for setting up co-operative security structures. New confidence can be generated by enhancing transparency, improving predictability in the military sphere and promoting military contacts. My Government therefore seeks an agreement by November 1990 on a set of substantive new confidence- and security-building measures.

Today we have the opportunity in Europe to achieve security not through military rivalry but through co-operation and openness. This also necessitates the further development of political institutions and mechanisms. The CSCE provides a forward-looking framework for this purpose. The CSCE summit in Paris next month will for the first time give the CSCE process an institutional character and open up a new chapter in Europe's history.

(Mr. Brautigam, Germany)

This will include regular summit consultations and meetings of the Foreign Ministers of all 35 participating countries as well as the establishment of a conflict prevention centre.

The Western Alliance is engaged in the process of adapting to the new conditions in Europe. The London Declaration, issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council, states:

"the Alliance's strategy, structure and armaments must be adapted in line with the new situation and geared to the overriding goal of co-operative stability;

"the members of the Atlantic Alliance no longer regard the Soviet Union and the other countries of Central and Eastern Europe as adversaries but as fellow architects of the new Europe and extend to them the hand of co-operation".

The events of recent weeks have again brought home to us that the use of poison gas, one of the most dreadful and pernicious weapons, is by no means merely an abstract danger. As impressively reaffirmed by the 149 countries participating in the Paris Conference in January 1989, there is world-wide consensus that only a complete ban on chemical weapons can fundamentally improve the situation.

The progress that was made possible by the United States-Soviet co-operation in the field of chemical-weapon disarmament is a convincing example of what can be achieved when there is a serious will to negotiate. However, the last session of the Geneva Conference on Disarmament failed to produce the hoped-for breakthrough towards the long-overdue global ban on chemical weapons. Nevertheless, we are convinced that no truly insurmountable problems remain on the road to a convention banning chemical weapons. Given sufficient readiness to compromise and a serious will to achieve success on everyone's part, it should be possible to open the Convention for signature by the end of 1991. Together with its Western partners,

(Mr. Brautigam, Germany)

the Federal Republic of Germany has stated its intention to be one of the first signatories of a convention banning chemical weapons world-wide.

The Federal Republic of Germany advocates an early agreement on an effectively verifiable nuclear-test ban at the Geneva Conference on Disarmament. It last reaffirmed this position at the Fourth Review Conference of Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. It considers a step-by-step approach to this goal to be expedient and desirable.

My Government welcomes the re-establishment this year of the Ad Hoc Committee on a test ban at the Geneva Conference on Disarmament. We hope that this Committee will be able next year to continue its thorough and comprehensive treatment of all questions connected with a nuclear-test ban.

My Government finds it regrettable that the Fourth Review Conference of Parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty ended without the adoption of a final document. It is encouraged, however, by the degree of concordance on central non-proliferation issues expressed at the Conference. Awareness of the vast destructive potential of the atom bomb makes nuclear-arms control one of the central objectives of our arms-control policy. This objective is shared by all States Members of the United Nations.

As for the forthcoming United States-Soviet negotiations on the reduction of short-range nuclear systems, Germany again has a strong interest in a solution which takes account of the changed military and political conditions as well as the elimination of the East-West conflict and which helps to strengthen security and stability in Europe. Land-based nuclear missile systems are increasingly losing their military and political justification as Europe merges into a single security area. This is all the more true of nuclear artillery. We shall advocate the most comprehensive possible, mutual and verifiable reduction of these systems. The

(Mr. Brautigam, Germany)

expected completion next month of the negotiations on conventional armed forces in Europe will pave the way for negotiations on short-range nuclear systems.

We fully support the strategic arms reduction (START) negotiations on a dramatic reduction in the strategic nuclear arsenals of the United States and the Soviet Union. They serve the interests not only of the participants or of European countries but of the entire international community. We hope that the unprecedented series of high-level and top-level United States-Soviet meetings will lead to the conclusion of a treaty before the end of this year.

Transparency and openness are the key to the verification of arms-control agreements and to confidence-building. These are also the goals pursued by the West with its Open Skies proposal, which was the subject of negotiations at Ottawa and Budapest earlier this year. The Open Skies initiative opens up a new dimension of confidence-building. The conclusion of an Open Skies agreement could make another important contribution to openness and confidence and would further stimulate the arms-control process.

My Government attaches great importance to the United Nations as the only forum where all members of the international community can share in the disarmament debate. In this way the United Nations constructively complements the ongoing bilateral and multilateral disarmament negotiations. We hope that the results of disarmament negotiations in one region serve as an incentive for other regions of the world.

Confidence-building can help eliminate tensions. Over the past years this Committee has reached a consensus on confidence-building on which we must build. We are encouraged by the unanimous interest expressed by parliamentarians from all parts of the world at Bonn in May of this year in the experience gained by Europe in the field of confidence-building.

(Mr. Brautigam, Germany)

Enhanced peace and stability in one region must not result in further discord and instability in other regions through the increasing export of military equipment from one part of the world, where the market for it has disappeared, to other parts. Recent events make greater transparency in arms transfers imperative. We regard the standardized United Nations system for reporting on military expenditure as an essential contribution to fostering transparency and we hope that all countries that have not yet done so will participate as soon as possible.

This year we shall submit draft resolutions on confidence-building measures and on science and technology for disarmament. This Committee's work can give fresh impetus to the debate now under way on arms conversion. Through the joint efforts of all Member States, we succeeded last year in initiating the reform of the United Nations Disarmament Commission's activities.

(Mr. Brautigam, Germany)

We are greatly interested in this reform being successfully completed and hope that all member countries will support it in a spirit of compromise.

In the medium and the long term, nobody will lose from progress in disarmament. On the contrary, co-operative security releases forces and resources for the world-wide fight against poverty and underdevelopment and for the conservation of our common natural resources.

You may rest assured, Mr. Chairman, that we shall support you in your work.

Mr. ORDOÑEZ (Philippines): On behalf of the Philippine delegation, let me extend my warmest congratulations to you, Sir, on this the forty-fifth United Nations Day, and express our support for you in your capacity as Chairman of the First Committee. The Philippines is cognizant of Nepal's leading role in disarmament, which has been appropriately recognized by the location in Kathmandu of the United Nations Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific I have no doubt that, with your personal diplomatic skills and wide-ranging experience, you will lead the Committee to a successful conclusion.

Let me also take the opportunity to thank Under-Secretary-General Yasushi Akashi and the highly efficient staff of the Department for Disarmament Affairs. We found Mr. Akashi's report dated 15 October on the activities of his department especially enlightening.

"We have closed the book on World War II and started a new age". These were the words uttered by Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Schevardnadze on the occasion of the signing in Moscow last month of the Treaty on the final settlement with respect to Germany - a historic occasion graced by the presence of Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev and the representatives of the four allied Powers and the two Germanys. On 3 October all other nations had the opportunity to welcome a united Germany at the United Nations General Assembly. On 15 October President Gorbachev's

(Mr. Ordoñez, Philippines)

achievements in furthering the cause of peace and security were recognized by his being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, on which we extend to him our heartiest congratulations.

Undoubtedly, 1990 is a major turning point. As was stated by President Corazon Aquino on the eve of the last negotiation of the Philippine-United States Bases Agreement, "The old cannot continue; the new must now be born." The challenge of realizing the goals of this era, which has been declared the Decade of International Law and simultaneously the Third United Nations Disarmament Decade, looms larger than ever before. But, even as troops are withdrawn, arms reduced and tensions lessened in one part of the world, a conflict striking at the heart of the principles of the Charter has erupted in another area.

October 1990 will therefore be remembered as a Janus-like month which faced starkly both forward and backward.

Traditionally, this has also been the month when we begin our work in the First Committee, not simply for numerical reasons but because of its primary function: the discussion of the over-arching issues of international peace and security and of disarmament.

The Philippines is among the many nations which have welcomed the vastly improved relations between the two major Powers and their respective alliances, as setting the stage for greater co-operation and stability in the field of international peace and security. The Philippines is also among those countries which during the cold war sought to find an alternative path, best exemplified by the Non-Aligned Movement, that would truly represent the interests of the developing world.

With the 45-year-long cold war abruptly drawn to a close, we find our world in a state of flux, with the familiar signposts, directions and guidelines obscured or taken away.

(Mr. Ordoñez, Philippines)

However, the new situation before us simply confirms the validity of our common stand previously. The challenge now is to achieve these goals in the light of the vastly changed circumstances in which we find ourselves today. Our duty is to see to it that, in a recent period of bilateral success, multilateral efforts, already confirmed as viable in such bodies as the Security Council and the process of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, to name but two, do not go unheeded and, indeed, are furthered. This is especially important in the field of disarmament and international peace and security.

As we look back on the year since our last deliberations in 1989, we note that we have indeed made considerable progress in the multilateral process.

Foremost among the achievements is the renewed commitment to the collective security system and the rule of international law as embodied in the Charter. As we enter this new post-cold-war era, we are called upon as members of the international community to ensure that this commitment does not waver and that we do not have recourse to unilateral actions and measures contrary to the spirit of the Charter.

In disarmament, the new spirit of co-operation in the multilateral field was well reflected at the last session of the Disarmament Commission, held in May this year. Whereas in past years we were blocked and stymied on several issues, this year, under the forceful leadership of Ambassador Nana Sutresna of Indonesia, we were able to conclude important items and adopt measures that will streamline the proceedings of the Commission. All told, the Disarmament Commission emerged as a stronger and more efficient body than it had ever been before. What has ritually been described as "political will" - which had been found wanting in many bodies of the United Nations - emerged at the 1990 session of the Disarmament Commission.

This political will was also evident in the majority of countries present at the preparatory session of the 1991 partial test-ban amendment Conference, held in

(Mr. Ordoñez, Philippines)

New York in May and June this year. Though some stumbling-blocks were put in its way, the achievement and successful conclusion of the preparatory session reflected the will of the majority of the parties to the partial test-ban Treaty concerning the urgent need for and the importance of a comprehensive test-ban treaty. It is expected that the 1991 amendment Conference, as well as any further sessions on the same line, will continue to reinforce and reflect that political will.

The Philippines was an active participant in the Fourth Review Conference of the parties to the non-proliferation Treaty, held in Geneva in August and September this year. Several delegations regretted the lack of a final document at the conclusion of the meeting in the early dawn of 15 September. We note at this session of the First Committee that some delegations regard the Fourth Review Conference as a success despite the lack of a final document; while others are not of this opinion.

For those who may consider it of overriding importance, as much as 95 per cent of what would have been a final text is estimated to have been negotiated by the closing hour of the Conference, reflecting both the diligence of the representatives and the desire to achieve a consensus. What finally prevented a consensus was not a mere detail or a sticking point arbitrarily chosen by any one delegation. The urgent need for a comprehensive test-ban treaty is an issue on which the majority of non-nuclear-weapon States are agreed and something that will be consistently pursued in this and other bodies. We hope that the nuclear-weapon States will finally realize the significance of this step for issues of non-proliferation of all kinds of weapons and for international peace and security, and act accordingly.

(Mr. Ordoñez, Philippines)

To be sure, in light of an international situation newly endangered by a regional conflict, those States as well as others will have to take the long view in adopting such a measure. In any case, the resolution of such conflicts should surely not depend either on current nuclear weapons or on new weapons of mass destruction.

The Fourth Review Conference of the nuclear non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) was also valuable in providing the opportunity to examine in closer detail ideas and proposals to promote, encourage or serve the goal of non-proliferation. Among those which we found noteworthy as a step towards non-proliferation was the support expressed by the delegations for the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones and zones of peace in various regions of the world. We take seriously the commitment expressed in section 8 of our Constitution, which states that the Philippines

"consistent with the national interest, adopts and pursues a policy of freedom from nuclear weapons in its territory."

This was entirely consistent with the intention expressed by the member countries of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) in Kuala Lumpur in 1971 and again in 1977. They stated that they were

"determined to exert initially necessary efforts to secure recognition of and respect for South East Asia as a zone of peace, freedom and neutrality, free from any form or manner of interference by outside Powers."

In 1987, the Manila Declaration of the ASEAN Heads of States affirmed that

"ASEAN shall intensify all efforts towards achieving the early recognition of a zone of peace, freedom and neutrality in South-East Asia in consultation with States outside ASEAN."

It further stated that

(Mr. Ordoñez, Philippines)

"ASEAN shall intensify its efforts towards the early establishment of a South-East Asian nuclear-weapon-free zone, to include the continuation of the consideration of all aspects relating to the establishment of the zone and of an appropriate instrument to establish the zone."

We note that the South-East Asian zone of peace, freedom and neutrality, as well as the nuclear-weapon-free zone, would be contiguous to the zone which is covered by the Treaty of Rarotonga and which in turn is proximate to both the zone covered by the Treaty of Tlatelolco and the area covered by the Antarctic Treaty.

In the past year we have seen iron curtains pierced and lifted, barbed wires and cruelly divisive walls taken down, countries as diverse as Germany and Yemen reunified. In North-East Asia, the question of the reunification of the Korean peninsula has again arisen. In our own region of South-East Asia, an end to the Cambodian problem and peace on the Indo-Chinese peninsula loom as strong possibilities in the immediate future. As stated by the Foreign Minister of Indonesia, Mr. Ali Alatas:

"The path ahead may still be rocky but I am confident that we have now come to the final stretch on the road to a just and enduring peace in Cambodia and an end to the immense suffering of its people." (A/45/PV.5, p. 64)

Even in this period of continued stress, we no longer consider it a pipe dream to propose that the zone of peace, freedom and neutrality in South-East Asia (ZOPFAN) and the nuclear-weapon-free zone will finally be realized.

For its part, the Philippines is determined both to live up to the demands of its Constitution and fully to support the aims of ASEAN as regards a nuclear-weapon-free zone and a zone of peace, freedom and neutrality, and hopes to get the support of the community of nations in this endeavour.

(Mr. Ordoñez, Philippines)

The experience gained at the Fourth NPT Review Conference should serve to hearten rather than discourage us. As a way of preparing for the fifth NPT review conference, we should consider more frequent informal consultations, initially on a yearly basis, among all Parties, as well as with non-parties to the Treaty, to discuss ways and means to strengthen the Treaty with a view to its renewal after 1995.

Turning to the work of the First Committee, we wish to touch on the question of rationalization as a means of strengthening its effective functioning. We recognize the intrinsic value of many of the initiatives which have been debated in this forum over the course of the years. In fact, we have supported the vast majority of the First Committee resolutions and co-sponsored those initiatives which were consistent with our national policies. However, we also recognize the possibility of diluting our effectiveness as a Committee through the sheer proliferation of resolutions as well as through duplication and overlap of initiatives. The First Committee has been known to be among those producing the largest number of resolutions in the General Assembly - an indication of the importance of its topic but also of the number of unsettled issues of disarmament and international peace and security resulting from the cold war. At a time of realignment and of a major sea change in international relations, we have an opportunity to restate our priorities and to make our original message clearly heard and understood through fewer but more effective resolutions.

Like other delegations, the Philippines has its own list of disarmament topics which it considers important and on which it will intervene in the course of our proceedings. It hopes that maximum flexibility and restraint will be shown by all delegations in the course of the proceedings and that, as has been the trend, greater consensus and agreement will be achieved on a wider range of resolutions than in previous years. In this connection, it signals its support to the

(Mr. Ordoñez, Philippines)

Chairman for his efforts both at rationalization and at achieving greater consensus in this Committee.

With regard to the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, we wish to indicate our appreciation and support for its efforts to achieve a treaty which would completely ban the deployment, production, stockpiling and development of chemical weapons. We believe that this task has become all the more urgent and that the achievement of a treaty - the first potential one in the Conference's history - would serve to boost both the cause of multilateral disarmament and the efficacy of the Conference on Disarmament itself. We also await movement in the Conference on Disarmament through the provision in 1991 of negotiating mandates to ad hoc committees on such vital issues as a nuclear-test ban and a comprehensive programme of disarmament.

Through you, Mr. Chairman, we should like to express our sincere thanks for the efforts of the officers of the Conference on Disarmament to inform us of the progress in its work, as was recently done formally by the Chairman of the Conference and will be done tomorrow by the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons. We hope that such briefings will also be provided us in the future by other sub-committees of the Conference on Disarmament.

At the beginning, we noted that the month of October 1990 would be remembered as a special month of deliberations since it faced, Janus-like, towards the past and the future. In the Philippines also October is special because we celebrate during this month the ancient feast called La Naval de Manila. This commemorates the defence and salvation of the city from destruction by foreign forces in the seventeenth century - a fate it was not able to escape 300 years later.

(Mr. Ordoñez, Philippines)

The old historic walled city of Intramuros in Manila where La Naval was traditionally held suffered most during the Second World War. In fact, Manila's destruction was only surpassed by that of Warsaw in the Second World War. Where the heart of the city once lay is a gaping hole, and though some belated attempts have been made to reconstruct it, it will never be the same as it was prior to 1945. It is a permanent reminder to Filipinos of the terrible price of the arms race, of war and the suffering it inflicts on peoples and cultures. As a symbol, Intramuros de Manila - especially in the month of October - inspires us all to work all the harder to achieve the goals of our Committee.

Mr. HOULLEZ (Belgium) (interpretation from French): First of all, Sir, I should like to express to you the warm congratulations of my delegation on your election as Chairman of the First Committee. I am sure that you will perform your responsibilities with great judgement and diplomacy, and that our work will proceed harmoniously under your enlightened leadership.

My delegation will be happy to co-operate fully with you in your efforts to improve the functioning of this Committee.

The statement made by the Italian President of the European Community, which Belgium fully supports, makes it unnecessary for me to speak at length about the various points that were taken up. I will thus confine myself to a few points which we think are priority matters.

Sufficient stress has been laid on the end of the cold war and the emergence of a growing community of interests between countries that were formerly adversaries. Therefore, it is unnecessary for me to dwell on this formidable upheaval. The recent unification of Germany, which is evidence of greater stability in Europe, is undeniably a dazzling indication of this new climate.

The near future will no doubt confirm this general trend in various ways: the imminent ratification by the two nuclear Powers of the Protocols to the 1974 and 1976 Treaties on thresholds and peaceful nuclear explosions; the forthcoming conclusion of a START agreement; the imminent agreement in Vienna on the balanced reduction of conventional forces in Europe, the convening in Paris of the summit of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe; and the ambitious arms control programme established by the Heads of State and Government in the Declaration of London, aimed at bringing about a lasting peace in Europe.*

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* Mr. Martynov (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

(Mr. Houllez, Belgium)

However, we cannot demand that the major Powers and Europe alone disarm immediately and in all fields, while in other regions of the world disarmament is barely, if at all, being considered. This situation can only reinforce our apprehensions regarding the growing number of countries in different parts of the world which are acquiring arsenals of weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles. My delegation is convinced that the global improvement in international relations can and should lead to renewed and strengthened efforts in arms control and disarmament. That is why we must work tirelessly where feasible and, in particular, at the Conference on Disarmament, so as to give substance to our ambitions for disarmament.

My delegation believes that an initiative should be taken to ensure that the question of regional disarmament will be dealt with by the Disarmament Commission. This idea is shared by numerous delegations from different parts of the world, some of which have mentioned the possibility of a resolution.

My delegation and the countries of the European Community agree with this approach. However, we wonder whether the study that might eventually be carried out by the Disarmament Commission should not concentrate first and foremost on the role that confidence-building measures could play as a point of departure or a catalyst in this area.

I should like to draw your attention to the fact that this would be an initiative reflected in a text which differs from the type of document that my delegation usually submits every two or three years in an effort to rationalize our work. This new text should take into account two considerations.

First, there should be a growing, widespread awareness of the need to set up disarmament machinery at the regional level, based on a climate of confidence created by mutual respect, justice, solidarity and co-operation. The European experience is the most striking example of this. But other initiatives have been

(Mr. Houllez, Belgium)

taken, in particular, in Latin America, which should also ensure the conditions necessary for effective and lasting regional disarmament. Lastly, current events give us further proof that tensions in certain parts of the world must be resolved in a local, regional context with the assistance of the United Nations.

The second consideration is, quite naturally, related to what I have just said. This new draft directly concerns the work being carried out by this great Organization. The Disarmament Commission should, most certainly, deal with this question within its deliberative framework.

In this regard, my delegation welcomes the excellent climate in which the Disarmament Commission carried out its work at its 1990 session, which ensured a transition towards a more feasible procedure in its management and its spirit. This subsidiary body of the United Nations will be able to do more effectively what is expected of it once the provisions governing it have been properly refined.

If we had to sum up the 1990 session of the Disarmament Conference, we could no doubt use the expression "year of transition".

In support of this, I need only mention a striking development that characterized this year's work: the restoration of the Ad Hoc Committee under agenda item 1 of its agenda, concerning a nuclear-test ban. There was not enough time, in just a few weeks, to take up matters of substance, but I think we can safely assume that work will be resumed next year in a constructive spirit in order to achieve the objective, which Belgium - as well as many other States - has always pursued, namely, the total, final and verifiable cessation of testing. This could be achieved at the end of a step-by-step process, in which certain milestones can already be seen, both at the bilateral level, involving the United States and the Soviet Union, and at the multilateral level. The Disarmament Conference has yet to agree on the notion of scope and on all the aspects of verification of a future treaty. In this regard, the work of the Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts on

(Mr. Houllez, Belgium)

seismic matters and their relationship to verification must be duly appreciated. Furthermore, Ambassador Palenykh and Ambassador Robinson, the negotiators for the Protocols of the peaceful nuclear explosions Treaty and the threshold test-ban Treaty, have revealed the complexity of an effective verification system in the area of nuclear testing. These and other matters must be dealt with as part of a programme of work, on which all participants must reach agreement on the basis of a mandate, which must essentially be realistic.

The question of nuclear testing was also discussed at considerable length at the Fourth Review Conference on the non-proliferation Treaty, recently held in Geneva. Some participants merely focused on the absence of a final declaration. While we do regret this failure, we would like to be a bit more specific in our assessment of the declaration.

(Mr. Houllez, Belgium)

Without wishing to play down the importance of the issue of a cessation of nuclear tests by the nuclear Powers, we do not believe that it is of paramount importance in the area of non-proliferation. Belgium particularly regrets the rejection by some delegations of a compromise which is otherwise acceptable to almost all parties to the Treaty. This attitude made it impossible to reach agreement on a broad formula relating to many issue which, in our view, are more directly related to the issue of the proliferation of nuclear weapons, and are therefore very much more relevant.

The participants realized that the Treaty was not as watertight as it ought to be. Measures to strengthen controls were proposed which, if they were universally applied, would make a decisive contribution to strengthening the non-proliferation régime.

As regards negative security assurances, the report of the Conference on Disarmament stresses here again the hopes we might have for the future:

> "... many positive political changes were underway which were expected to have a bearing on the search for possible solutions". (A/45/27, para. 121, part IV, para. 19, (p. 329))

The Belgian delegation remains convinced that the Conference on Disarmament is the appropriate place for negotiations on such assurances. We would like to reaffirm, however, that even in the absence of a common formula, the unilateral assurances given by the nuclear Powers and reaffirmed in Geneva at the most recent Review Conference of the Parties to the non-proliferation Treaty remain completely valid. My delegation remains willing, however, to consider any realistic proposal which would aim to strengthen or rationalize the existing régime.

(Mr. Houllez, Belgium)

In particular, we believe that suitable measures might be needed to assure the protection of non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty, given the attitude - which to us seems an ambiguous one - on the part of some States, whether parties to the Treaty or not, with major nuclear facilities not under safeguards.

On yet more points, the Conference on Disarmament has shown its willingness to forge ahead and open up serious prospects for reaching a consensus text at the next session. I am thinking in particular of the splendid job carried out by the contact group responsible for developing a draft convention banning radiological weapons. The text we now have has a logical structure, with a well-reasoned preamble and a new section entitled "Verification and compliance" (A/45/27, para. 124, annex, attachment, part V (p. 336)). Work will resume in 1991 on a good, solid document, and the few areas of disagreement which remain ought to be able to be eliminated at the next session.

This encouraging outcome makes it painfully obvious that there has been a complete stalemate in the work of the parallel contact group responsible for considering a prohibition of attacks against nuclear facilities. My delegation would be interested in any initiative aimed at getting these negotiations going again, and therefore supports the proposals made at the recent Review Conference of the Parties to the non-proliferation Treaty.

My delegation would now like to turn to the area of chemical weapons, which falls under the purview of the Conference on Disarmament - an area which we consider one of particular importance.

Although we do welcome the progress made in these last few years in the Geneva negotiations, we are not alone in deploring the fact that despite the dynamism and open-mindedness of the Chairman, Ambassador Hyltenius, the Ad Hoc Committee did not live up to our expectations at its last session. The lack of a breakthrough was attributable, among other things, to the fact the fundamental political aspects

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are emerging at this stage in the negotiations, which have sometimes focused too much on technical details. In addition, the threat now being made by one State to use these weapons, and their persistent proliferation, have emphasized the deterioration in the general climate of the talks in Geneva, even though the international community has unequivocally condemned chemical weapons because they are so horrendous. I would point out that my country, as you will be aware, had painful experience of these weapons at the beginning of this century.

The only way to spare mankind any more suffering from chemical weapons is to ban them completely, finally and universally and to do so as soon as possible, by producing an effective legal instrument which would eliminate chemical weapons as a military option for ever. To achieve this, there are three crucial stages we must go through: we must conclude the treaty and open it to signature, and then there must be a transitional period during which the objective of the treaty must be achieved in its vertical dimension, that is, by the destruction of chemical weapons and production facilities, and in the horizontal dimension, that is, by the universal renunciation of these weapons.

To overcome the reticence of those who hang back from involving themselves in the concluding stage, we should seek to reconcile the notions of a system providing maximum assurances that it will be observed, in other words, a system which would inspire confidence, and one which would cost a reasonable amount and would make it possible for all countries, large and small, to participate in it. The mesh of the verification net must be fine enough to discourage any tendency to slip through it, by exposing offenders to a real risk of being caught out in their activities in breach of the treaty.

The members of the Atlantic Alliance, at the ministerial meeting at Turnberry in June last year, stated that the solemn commitment of the United States and the

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USSR to discontinue all production and to begin to destroy their chemical weapon facilities and stockpiles even before the entry into force of the Convention should give a major impetus to the work being done to conclude the treaty as soon as possible.

My country fully endorsed that statement, and welcomes the fact that some of the provisions of the Soviet-American agreement have already been incorporated into this rolling text of the future convention, and also welcomes the fact that the United States began destroying its stockpiles last July.

There have been some who have pointed out the difficulties of viewing some provisions of the Soviet-American agreement as a contribution to our multilateral negotiations. It is quite natural that a bilateral agreement should sometimes be based on certain particular considerations; however, it ought to be said that we would still be no further forward than we were a few years ago if the United States and the Soviet Union had not abandoned their unique status as the principal possessors of chemical weapons. This is why Belgium believes, as do other countries, that the Soviet-American bilateral agreement deserves study, as a positive contribution towards concluding a truly universal convention. My delegation welcomes the Soviet-American commitment to make use of the provisions of the universal draft treaty in so far as is possible.

(Mr. Houllez, Belgium)

Negotiations are at a crossroads. Undoubtedly, the main question is how to avoid a situation in which the two super-Powers would not possess chemical weapons while other countries would keep them or try to acquire them while staying outside the convention. In the common declaration at Turnberry last June, Belgium, along with its partners in the Alliance, agreed to be one of the first signatories to the convention and to promote its entry into force at the earliest possible date. We welcome a similar commitment by the States of Eastern Europe and many other States, in the hope that this example will soon be followed by others, possibly in the form of a General Assembly resolution.

Furthermore, it should also be recalled that declarations by States regarding whether or not they possess chemical weapons and on their formal commitment to abandon such weapons by adhering to the convention serve to enhance confidence and transparency in the negotiations. My delegation invites all countries possessing chemical weapons to come forward and pledge to destroy them.

The idea that a ministerial conference is needed to provide fresh impetus to the negotiations has made some progress. We support that initiative. However, we believe, too, that a ministerial conference in itself is not a panacea and that thorough and careful preparation is indispensable.

The prospects of such a high-level meeting should encourage the negotiators of the Ad Hoc Committee to do their utmost to create the conditions necessary for success - that is to say, a spirit of compromise and political will should prevail in the work of the Committee so that crucial matters may be resolved such as those concerning verification, universality, and assistance and co-operation, as well as questions relating to institutions, in particular the Executive Council.

My country continues to give high priority to the conclusion of a treaty on chemical disarmament and we ardently hope that negotiators will bequeath to the international community a safer world free from the scourge of chemical weapons.

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This year the Conference on Disarmament has begun organizational reforms that should lead to improvement as to its functioning and effectiveness. We are convinced that that process should continue. Furthermore, we think it is important to resolve without delay the problem of the increased membership so as to resolve the deadlock in the Conference in that regard. We must overcome the contradiction, on the one hand, of calling for as broad as possible adherence to conventions that are to be concluded by the Conference, while on the other, refusing to implement decisions that have already been agreed concerning the admission of new members. This problem will again arise at the start of the 1991 session. We hope that realism and open-mindedness will prevail in dealing with that question, while taking account of the other provisions of the rules of procedure.

Mr. HAYES (Ireland): Let me begin by congratulating Mr. Rana on his unanimous election as Chairman of the Committee. His experience, wisdom and capacity are sure guarantees that our work will be guided firmly towards satisfactory results. I also congratulate the other members of the Bureau and wish them all well in their tasks while assuring them of my delegation's full co-operation.

My delegation, of course, associates itself with and fully endorses the statement already made in this debate by the Ambassador of Italy on behalf of the 12 States members of the European Community.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ireland stated in his address to the General Assembly a few weeks ago that

> "With the end of the East-West confrontation, we have begun at last to emerge into a truly post-war world where the institutions of international order established after the Second World War could function as intended". (A/45/PV.9, p. 131)

(Mr. Hayes, Ireland)

While recent events in the Gulf presented a serious test for the institutions of international order, these institutions have responded in a decisive manner. Ireland fully supports the Security Council resolutions already adopted in relation to the crisis in the Gulf. This crisis has demonstrated the importance of the United Nations and underlines the fact that it is the forum in which the collective will of the international community can be clearly expressed.

The United Nations, in accordance with the Charter, has a central role in the sphere of disarmament. Correspondingly, it has a key role to play in the achievement of a co-operative approach to international security. Such an approach must be based on the building of confidence among nations and - by eliminating the means of waging war - removing the fear of attack. In this context Ireland believes that the elimination of nuclear weapons is of primary importance.

It is essential that recent achievements in bilateral and regional arms control negotiations be reflected also in progress on the central issues on the multilateral disarmament agenda. In the bilateral area we have seen the conclusion of the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles (INF); we have seen good progress on START; recent agreements between the United States and the Soviet Union on the verification protocols of the threshold test-ban and the peaceful nuclear explosion Treaties have also occurred; and we have seen agreement on reduction of their chemical-weapon stocks. In Europe, there is the promising prospect of negotiations on short-range nuclear missiles and unprecedented progress in conventional arms control. Despite all this, much remains to be achieved in the disarmament field. To demonstrate this I shall give a few examples of undesirable features still continuing in this field:

The world is still spending more than $2.5 billion on armaments every day. While the quantitative nuclear-arms race appears to have slowed, approximately

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47,000 nuclear warheads still exist and continue to threaten the very survival of life on this planet;

Nuclear tests and the qualitative development of nuclear weapons are continuing;

No multilateral negotiations towards the acheivement of a comprehensive test-ban treaty have taken place in the last five years;

Just as we approach the serious possibility of significant reductions in numbers of nuclear weapons held by the super-Powers, we face the fearsome prospect of increases in the number of nuclear-weapons States.

Progress in the negotiations on a chemical-weapons convention in the Conference on Disarmament remains very slow.

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The present climate in international relations affords us a unique opportunity to make real progress in disarmament and to move away from the mistaken belief that security must necessarily be based on military strength. It is essential that we take advantage of this opportunity. The best way to do so is by the attainment of a few key objectives which we consider to be of vital importance.

The first and most important objective is to halt the nuclear-arms race. An issue of major concern in this connection is the qualitative arms race, that is, the development of new and more destructive nuclear weapons. To stop the development of such weapons we need an immediate end to nuclear testing. We believe that this requires a comprehensive test-ban treaty. The total prohibition of nuclear testing should be seen as the first step towards disarmament, not as the final stage, to be undertaken only after the other elements of disarmament have been agreed. A universal production cut-off in weapons-grade fissionable material is also required.

We note that there have been some positive developments in the area of nuclear testing. The agreement between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on ratification of the threshold test-ban Treaty and the peaceful nuclear explosions Treaty is welcome. We are also encouraged by the recent re-establishment of the Ad-Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban at the Conference on Disarmament. However, to be effective, this Committee must be speedily empowered to undertake real negotiations. All nuclear-weapon States should participate in these negotiations with a view to the early and successful conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty.

The cessation of all nuclear-weapon testing, as a matter of top priority, is a constant and annually repeated demand of the world community. Yet, over 30 years of deliberations and negotiations have produced partial agreements only. These

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have not hindered improvements in nuclear weapons. Thus, the political reality is that failure to agree on a comprehensive test-ban treaty means that one of the major hopes and aspirations of non-nuclear-weapon States has not been met. In this regard, Ireland understands the motives behind the convening of the forthcoming negotiations on the amendment of the partial test-ban Treaty. We hope that the amendment Conference, in which we will participate in a constructive manner, will pave the way to a commitment by all States - including, most importantly, the nuclear-weapon States - to a comprehensive test-ban treaty.

A second and equally important objective is the maintenance and strengthening of an effective nuclear non-proliferation régime. In our view, a universal and effective nuclear non-proliferation régime is in the best interests of international peace and stability and of all countries, both nuclear and non-nuclear. The non-proliferation Treaty, which has proved to be the keystone in efforts to contain nuclear proliferation, remains one of the most important arms-control agreements reached to date. It is also the most widely supported arms-control measure in history.

Ireland is a strong and consistent supporter of the nuclear non-proliferation Treaty. My delegation regrets, therefore, that the recent Fourth Review Conference did not agree on a concluding document. We are convinced, however, that the comprehensive review of the Treaty undertaken during the Conference will serve to strengthen both the Treaty itself and the commitment of States parties to its implementation. We noted especially the degree of consensus reached during the Review Conference on issues of particular importance for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, including full-scope safeguards and international co-operation on nuclear safety. We hope to build on the basis of the consensus reached at the Conference on a wide number of issues in order to ensure the continued viability

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of the Treaty and a successful meeting of States parties in 1995. We look forward to 1995 as an opportunity to reinforce the non-proliferation Treaty and to renew our commitment to it for an indefinite period. It will be clear from what I have said already that Ireland attaches the highest priority to the early achievement of a comprehensive test-ban treaty. We attach major importance also to the indefinite, unconditional extension by consensus of the non-proliferation Treaty, as an essential measure in its own right.

The Ambassador of Italy, speaking on behalf of the European Community and its member States, has already referred to the Declaration on Nuclear Non-Proliferation issued by the Heads of State or Government of the European Community in Dublin on 26 June 1990, during the Irish presidency of the Community. The Declaration is an illustration that as 12 sovereign States, including both nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States, we all share the same irreducible commitment to the objective of non-proliferation. We hope it will encourage others, whether parties to the non-proliferation Treaty or not, to work towards strengthening the non-proliferation régime.

A third objective is deep cuts in strategic and short-range nuclear weapons as a prelude to the complete elimination of all nuclear weapons. The continuing satisfactory implementation of the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - the INF Treaty - which for the first time ever eliminates a whole class of nuclear weapons, is most welcome. We welcome, too, the prospect of early conclusion of an agreement in the strategic arms limitation talks (START). A further positive development is the commitment of the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to initiate early consultations about additional reductions of strategic weapons. Talks on the reduction of short-range nuclear forces in Europe and on the elimination of all nuclear artillery shells from that region are also likely at an early date. However, these

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measures must not be seen as an end in themselves; they must be part of an irreversible movement towards general nuclear disarmament. This should include an end to the development of new weapons and of their delivery systems. It is obvious that all categories of nuclear weapons, sea-based, land-based or airborne, must be included in this process. In our view, the only acceptable level of nuclear weapons is zero.

We heard with interest the recent comments by the Swedish delegation on the issue of nuclear weapons at sea. This is a question of genuine concern to us. As the Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs pointed out in his recent statement to the General Assembly, we have repeatedly drawn attention to the dangers posed by nuclear-submarine traffic in the Irish Sea and similar areas of busy shipping and fishing activities. We are very seriously concerned by the possibility, even the likelihood, that sooner or later an accident will occur, with what could be calamitous consequences. In addition to the weapons carried by nuclear submarines, the nuclear-power units of these and other vessels are also cause for serious concern. In practice, these vessels are in some cases underwater and in all cases highly mobile nuclear-power stations, with nuclear-weapons capability. Like land-based nuclear installations, they are not immune to accidents, and indeed they are subject to the additional danger of collisions.

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With this in mind, we were pleased to support the recent Nordic proposal in the IAEA for the updating of safety guidelines for nuclear-powered vessels. The dangers posed to the environment, in the largest sense, by these vessels must be a legitimate object of concern in this United Nations forum also.

Fourthly, all other weapons of mass destruction should be eliminated. My Government believes that there should be no further delay in reaching agreement at the Conference on Disarmament on the total elimination of all chemical weapons and the destruction of stockpiles - in other words, in reaching agreement on a global ban on chemical weapons. We trust that the recent United States-Soviet Union agreement to make significant reductions in their chemical weapons stocks and to cease production of these weapons will facilitate progress in the negotiations on a comprehensive ban. The convention for a comprehensive ban, once agreed, must become truly a convention enjoying the universal participation of States. In this regard, once the negotiations on the convention have been satisfactorily concluded, Ireland intends, subject to the requisite governmental and parliamentary decisions, to be numbered among the original signatories to the convention and to encourage its early entry into force.

Ireland does not possess chemical weapons, nor is it a producer of chemicals generally regarded as central to acquiring a chemical weapons capacity. We fully support concerted international efforts to establish and strengthen strict controls on chemicals which can be used in the production of chemical weapons. However, such controls are no substitute for a chemical weapons convention.

Fifthly, international peace and security cannot be achieved unless all aspects of the problem of conventional disarmament, including the increasing sophistication of conventional weapons, are addressed by the international

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community. Conventional disarmament is an integral and important part of the disarmament process. The concept of general and complete disarmament was never intended to apply solely to nuclear weapons. While progress in nuclear disarmament cannot be held hostage to reductions in conventional armaments, prospects for nuclear disarmament would be immeasurably enhanced if the threats posed by conventional armaments were removed. Moreover, the conventional arms race serves to sharpen tensions; it undermines security; and it extends to every corner of the globe. It consumes vast resources which are needed - and indeed often desperately needed - for economic and social development.

In the context of disarmament, a most important element of the new relationships being established between the countries of Europe is the opportunity to establish a new system of security based on co-operation rather than on confrontation. The Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) provides the appropriate framework for this process. The Paris summit next month will put in place the structures to make this new co-operative system of security a reality. The current negotiations on security in Vienna, taking place within the CSCE framework, are contributing, in their separate ways, to increasing mutual trust and to bringing about a more peaceful and stable Europe. Very important agreements affecting the levels of conventional armaments have recently been reached in the negotiations on conventional armed forces in Europe. However, progress in the negotiations on confidence- and security-building measures must also be maintained so that positive and concrete results from both sets of negotiations are placed before the Paris summit. These agreements will represent a significant step towards more structured co-operation between CSCE participants on security matters. We look forward to the commencement of discussions among the Thirty-four aimed at establishing, by 1992, a disarmament and

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confidence-building measures process open to all CSCE members that wish to participate.*

The impetus for progress on the multilateral disarmament agenda must obviously also be reflected in the improved efficacy of the United Nations disarmament institutions. In this Committee in recent years we have seen a welcome increase in willingness to try to develop consensus on the many important topics on our agenda. This trend will, we hope, continue. The last session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission also reached a remarkable level of agreement on the outstanding items on its agenda. We hope that consensus will also be attained at this session of the General Assembly on the items to be included in the 1991 working agenda of the Commission. We shall continue to participate constructively in the ongoing consultations on this issue. However, the Conference on Disarmament must also fulfil its role as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum in the United Nations system. We earnestly hope that the States members of the Conference, which have been entrusted with negotiating responsibilities by the international community, will be able to fulfil their mandate by reaching consensus on the important issues on their agenda.

To conclude, all that I have said in this statement may be crystallized in an appeal to the international community to adopt and pursue fully an approach to disarmament based on the following elements: the development of a co-operative approach to security; a new emphasis on making progress in the multilateral disarmament process; and a determination to achieve first, a comprehensive test ban and an end to production of fissionable material for nuclear weapons; secondly, the strengthening of the Non-Proliferation Treaty; thirdly, deep cuts in strategic and

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* The Chairman returned to the Chair.

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shorter-range nuclear weapons as a prelude to the complete elimination of all nuclear weapons; fourthly, a complete ban on chemical weapons; and, fifthly, reduction in the level of conventional weapons. We believe that real progress can be made in these areas even in the short term if we avail ourselves of the opportunities offered by the improved climate in international relations.

Mr. MUNTEANU (Romania): At the outset, on behalf of the Romanian delegation I extend to you, Sir, my warmest congratulations on your election as Chairman of the First Committee. I am confident that your outstanding diplomatic skills and experience will guide us through a very productive session. I should also like to extend our best wishes of success to the other officers of the Committee. My delegation pledges its fullest co-operation to all of you in the accomplishment of the high responsibilities with which you have been entrusted.

(Mr. Munteanu, Romania)

The Committee is holding its meetings at a unique moment in European history. We are witnessing a fundamental change in our area of the world, putting an end to the cold war and to the East-West confrontation. The ideological division of Europe has ceased to exist, or has at least diminished to a great extent. The unification of Germany is indicative of the paramount process that will eventually lead to the fulfilment of the old dream of a united Europe.

The impending first treaty on substantial reductions of conventional armaments and a new set of confidence- and security-building measures are also practical steps towards that goal. Regardless of past experience, all European nations share the same fundamental human, political and economic values and have a common understanding of the need for a sound pattern of security and co-operation on the whole continent.

The Paris summit meeting that is to take place in a few weeks' time might well be viewed as a milestone on the road towards a new identity for Europe, opening up unprecedented prospects for security and co-operation.

Romania has undergone a process of fundamental change. My country's irreversible option is for a free society and pluralism, and respect for and full protection of the human rights and fundamental freedoms appertaining to all human beings. On that basis our foreign policy is firmly aimed at promoting broad and active co-operation with all nations. We strive to secure peace, achieve disarmament and strengthen regional and international security. In this context I should like to emphasize that Romania is firmly committed to the goal of arms control and disarmament, including nuclear weapons, other weapons of mass destruction and conventional weapons.

(Mr. Munteanu, Romania)

The Romanian Government is in favour of a comprehensive approach to arms limitation and disarmament issues and the adoption of concrete measures in all fields without linking results in one area to progress in another. At the same time, we believe that in the process of such negotiations all parties should show realism, flexibility, a spirit of compromise and pragmatism. We are confident that such an approach would open up new vistas for agreements in the negotiations on chemical weapons, a nuclear-test ban and other arms-control and disarmament problems.

Nuclear disarmament is one of the highest priorities for the international community. This objective can be achieved only through sustained efforts and progressive measures of nuclear arms limitation and disarmament. Therefore we welcome the agreements which have been reached, in particular the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - INF Treaty - and its satisfactory implementation. We believe that at present all efforts should be concentrated on speeding up the conclusion of a treaty on the reduction of offensive strategic weapons.

We very much appreciate the American-Soviet initiative in starting negotiations on the reduction of short-range nuclear forces in Europe. Shortly, a treaty on conventional armed forces in Europe will be signed, and there will be new negotiations on further reductions in their strategic weapons.

The challenge is real, since nuclear arsenals will continue to exist and their qualitative improvement will go on in spite of the agreements already implemented or already in progress.

(Mr. Munteanu, Romania)

Romania takes a firm stance in favour of a total ban on nuclear tests and favours decisive steps with this fundamental aim. The validity of this goal is also firmly based on moral and environmental considerations. At the same time, the positive impact of the prohibition of nuclear tests on progress towards the cessation of the nuclear-arms race, nuclear disarmament and the strengthening of the non-proliferation régime is not doubted by any nuclear or non-nuclear State.

We share the legitimate concern that, despite all the efforts made during more than a quarter of a century, the world has not yet come closer to that objective. My country, like most other States, considers that this situation calls for new and intensified efforts towards the complete prohibition of nuclear tests. We are of the view that the new international situation, the unprecedentedly positive developments in relations among the non-nuclear-weapon States in Europe and in other parts of the world, and the new approaches in arms control and disarmament offer better prospects for reaching that goal.

Committed though it is to the goal of a complete test-ban treaty, my country accepts the principle of reaching that objective gradually, in stages. In keeping with this flexible approach, Romania welcomes the agreement on the verification protocols to the threshold test-ban Treaty and the Treaty on peaceful nuclear explosions, which has opened the way for the entry into force of these agreements.

The Romanian Government will welcome any new agreement on further limitations on underground nuclear tests and any new step in this direction. We have noted with interest the readiness expressed in our debates regarding new negotiations on possible further limitations on nuclear testing, as well as the measures of

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self-restraint to be used in carrying out such tests. In our opinion, at the present time it is essential to find the most promising course of action and to initiate a genuine process of negotiations leading to the cessation of all nuclear tests.

The New York amendment Conference, which will take place in January 1991, might be able to give a political impetus to efforts to discontinue all nuclear tests. Aware as we are of the existing substantive differences of view on this subject, we believe that it is of vital importance and in the interest of attaining the goal of a nuclear-test ban to ensure that at the amendment Conference there will be an appropriate climate favourable to constructive talks and the search for solutions that will lead to the prohibition of nuclear tests. At the same time, the Conference should casue the efforts made elsewhere, in particular in the Conference on Disarmament, to achieve a nuclear-test ban to be not slackened, but intensified. We are in favour of the re-establishment, at the beginning of the 1991 session of the Conference on Disarmament, of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban and the continuance within this framework of systematic, substantive work on a nuclear-test ban, which, through negotiations, will lead to new openings and concrete steps towards an agreement.

Romania wishes to enhance its contribution to the substantive work of the Ad Hoc Committee, which will have to pave the way towards an agreement. In the same spirit, my country is participating in the work of the Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts to Consider International Co-operative Measures to Detect and Identify Seismic Events and in the experiments that are at present taking place in this field.

(Mr. Munteanu, Romania)

Romania believes the non-proliferation Treaty to be one of the pillars of a stable international system of peace, security and development. An efficient non-proliferation régime requires appropriate measures to prevent access to nuclear materials, equipment and technology for purposes other than peaceful. My country is fulfilling in good faith all the obligations it assumed under the non-proliferation Treaty and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) system of safeguards, as well as other recognized international arrangements in the field of nuclear transfers, which are an integral part of the non-proliferation régime.

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Romania recently adopted a number of important decisions to that end. Let me recall just a couple of them. The Romanian Government has issued a statement declaring null and void any possible agreements concluded by the former dictatorial régime which could have been in contradiction with the international obligations assumed by Romania in the field of non-proliferation. At the same time, Romania has officially accepted the non-proliferation guidelines for nuclear transfers - contained in document IFCIRC/254 of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) - agreed upon by the group of countries exporters of nuclear materials, equipment and technology. In reaching this decision the Government of Romania was fully aware of the need to participate in the development of nuclear energy while avoiding contributing in any way to the proliferation of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, and of the need to remove safeguards and non-proliferation assurances from the field of commercial competition.

The Fourth NPT Review Conference demonstrated that quite often non-proliferation issues and related matters give rise to controversy and even confrontation.

We believe that the prevention of the proliferation of nuclear weapons, the major objective, to which most States have subscribed - could best be achieved through genuine co-operation between equal partners acting towards a common goal. In our opinion, this is one of the foremost lessons of the Fourth NPT Review Conference, which confirmed that the cornerstone of the non-proliferation Treaty from the very beginning was, and still is, nuclear disarmament.

There is a growing concern on the part of the international community over chemical weapons, their posssible use and proliferation. The Romanian Government considers that the earliest possible conclusion, within the Conference on Disarmament, of a convention on the complete and effective prohibition of the

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development, production and stockpiling of chemical weapons and on their destruction has become a matter of utmost importance and urgency.

Romania is participating in the process of negotiations on the draft convention on chemical weapons and, like other countries, has taken this year a number of constructive steps to increase confidence and promote the achievement of such a convention.

For instance, Romania stated in a plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament that it does rot produce or have chemical weapons nor does it intend to produce or otherwise acquire such weapons in the future. It also stated that it is ready to become an original party to a convention with universal participation on the prohibition and destruction of chemical weapons.

At the same time, the Romanian Government has presented in a Conference on Disarmament working paper complete data regarding the production, retention or non-retention, consumption, import or export of substances of the civil chemical industry, data that could be relevant to the purpose of the future convention.

Romania wishes to take this opportunity to reaffirm in the First Committee the aforementioned statements and to confirm the complete data presented in the Conference on Disarmament.

We are fully aware of the core issues that have to be solved before there can be a global ban on chemical weapons. Nevertheless, we hope that the progress already made in drafting the text of the convention and the steps expected to be taken by various countries will lead in the near future to an efficient and universal legal instrument that will be all-encompassing and well balanced, providing among other things for effective international control on the prohibition and elimination of chemical weapons.

We welcome the bilateral agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union on chemical weapons and expect it to contribute to the conclusion of a

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comprehensive convention on the prohibition and elimination of all chemical weapons, as requested by the international community.

Like other countries, Romania is concerned over the risks of proliferation of chemical weapons before the conclusion and entry into force of the future convention, which would undermine or make more difficult the achievement of the objectives of prohibiting and eliminating all chemical weapons.

Romania expressed to the States concerned its readiness to join the Australia Group, which seeks to control the export of certain sensitive chemicals and chemical technology in order to prevent the proliferation of chemical weapons.

At the same time, measures are being taken to ensure at the national level the appropriate regulations and machinery functioning in conditions of privatization and in a market economy, which would guarantee strict control over the non-proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, and also co-operation with other States on these issues.

The Romanian Government considers that the changes in Europe and in the whole world call for an intensified and more productive process of disarmament and for increased efficiency on the part of all bodies involved in arms control and disarmament debates and negotiations so that they can keep pace with events and stimulate the positive course of political developments.

First of all, we think that the United Nations should strengthen its position in guiding and stimulating the activities of bodies debating or negotiating arms control and disarmament matters and should increase the efficacy of its own debates and resolutions.

Like other delegations, we welcome the new trend in the activities of the Disarmament Commission, which has a major role to play in multilateral disarmament.

(Mr. Munteanu, Romania)

My delegation appreciates the work and the positive results of the Disarmament Commission's last session, in particular the set of principles, adopted by consensus, on the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament.

In this context we take note with interest of the comprehensive study on nuclear weapons and the study on the role of the United Nations in the field of verification, which by their content and conclusions as well as recommendations deserve the particular attention of the First Committee and Member States.

We should also like to congratulate the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) on the useful activities it has carried out during the first 10 years of its existence and express the hope that it will make greater contributions in future.

At the same time, the Romanian delegation believes that the First Committee can and must play an increasingly effective role in the arms control and disarmament process. To this end we look with favour on various ideas and suggestions, such as those regarding the simplification of the agenda, the merger of draft resolutions and the consideration of some items on a two- or three-year basis. It goes without saying that a greater role for the First Committee in the field of arms control and disarmament requires, above all, a realistic and pragmatic approach to issues and an active and constructive search for meaningful consensus on practical solutions. We welcome your initiative, Mr. Chairman, in opening informal consultations on this subject which involve both substance and procedure.

(Mr. Munteanu, Romania)

In the same spirit, Romania fully supports the efforts being made to improve the activities and increase the efficiency of the Geneva Conference on Disarmament. In our opinion, the positive developments taking place in Europe and other parts of the world must be reflected in the proceedings and, particularly, in the results of the Geneva Conference.

While we welcome the steps taken at this year's session of the Conference, we believe that much still remains to be done to strengthen as much as possible the character of the Conference on Disarmament as a negotiating body so that it can fully meet the legitimate expectations of the world community in 1991 and subsequent years.

Mr. GHEZAL (Tunisia) (interpretation from Arabic): Allow me first of all to congratulate you most cordially, Sir, on behalf of the Tunisian delegation on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. Your personal qualities and abundant diplomatic experience, particularly in the Security Council and the Disarmament Commission, are guarantee enough for the successful conduct of our work.

We congratulate, too, the other officers of the Committee.

May I convey, too, to Mr. Yasushi Akashi, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, our thanks for his statement and for his tireless efforts on behalf of the cause of disarmament.

The representative of Algeria will speak on behalf of the member States of the Arab Maghreb Union. For my part, I have a number of observations which I wish to make on behalf of the Republic of Tunisia.

This session of the General Assembly is being held at a high point in history. For about a year now, the world has been witnessing a phase of profound change whose dimensions and consequences seem to broaden from one day to the next.

(Mr. Ghezal, Tunisia)

The time of cold wars, tension and ideological confrontations is past. This is a time of understanding and co-operation between the United States and the Soviet Union. The collapse of the Berlin Wall paved the way to the reunification of Germany, which has just taken place. This has been accompanied by a tidal wave of freedom and democracy in Central and Eastern Europe as well as in various parts of the third world. Namibia's accession to independence brought to an end the colonial era in Africa and brought with it the hope that the end of apartheid is near in South Africa. At the same time, the United Nations has regained the ability to play its role and carry out the mission entrusted to it under the Charter recognized for the maintenance of international peace and security and for the upholding of the rule of law and justice in the world.

The Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles signed by the United States and the Soviet Union in 1987, in our opinion, was an event which proved to be the harbinger of these changes. This fact highlights the true importance of disarmament for the future of mankind and for the new world order to which we fervently aspire.

Many other similar steps have been taken, or are about to be taken. Worthy of note is the United States-Soviet declaration on the elimination of chemical weapons and the prospect of the conclusion in the near future and within the framework of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) of an agreement on conventional forces.

Political will is more necessary now than ever if we are to bolster this trend and consolidate the present tendency towards a world of peace and harmony. The objective of the international community in this regard is the achievement of general and complete disarmament under international control.

We welcome the achievements that have been made towards the realization of that objective. However, complete and comprehensive nuclear, chemical and

(Mr. Ghezal, Tunisia)

conventional disarmament still requires a great deal of continuous unremitting efforts to ward off the threat of the mass destruction of humanity.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is of the highest importance in our view. Its implementation must, however, be accompanied by political and legal guarantees to non-nuclear-weapon States against the threat or use of such weapons. This certainly fits neatly into the logic of peace and security for all.

One can never overemphasize that the willingness of States to accede to the Treaty and to comply with the constraints it involves will continue to depend on its general and equal implementation without any kind of selectivity, since it would hardly be proper to invoke the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons while overlooking the nuclear capability of South Africa, or the nuclear armaments which have been stockpiled by Israel.

While persisting in its aggressive and expansionist policies and continuing to occupy by force the territory of the Palestinian people, South Lebanon and the Syrian Golan Heights, Israel continues to be the only country in the whole Middle East region which has refused - just exactly as South Africa has done - to accede to the non-proliferation Treaty or to place all its nuclear facilities under the safeguard system of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). However, the constant threat which it poses to the security and stability of the region, and well beyond, as everyone knows, is no mere figment of the imagination. It is a reality which we have seen in action repeatedly. In the absence of any deterrent, and since Israel enjoys the tolerance or collusion of some, it creates a dangerous precedent which can only become contagious and eventually attract other imitators.

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Therefore, it is incumbent on the Security Council, which has recently discovered a new vigour, to act and take appropriate action to put an end to this defiant resistance by compelling Israel to act in conformity with Security Council resolution 487 (1981) which, like so many other resolutions relating to Israel, has remained dead letter. Moreover, an end must be put to nuclear co-operation between Israel and South Africa.

We would like to commend the central role played by the Conference on Disarmament in the multilateral negotiating process. Tunisia is firmly committed to the Charter of the United Nations and to the attainment of the objectives enshrined therein. It has long shown a sustained interest in the work of the Conference, and would like to be able to contribute to it more fully. For that reason, it has applied to become a member of the Conference in order for it to take a more active part in the building of a new international order.

The Paris Conference on the prohibition of chemical weapons has given a new political momentum to the efforts of the international community to rid the world of these destructive and horrendous weapons. The Geneva Protocol needs to be consolidated and developed.

The changes now occurring in international affairs and the philosophy of peace and détente manifest in certain recent developments prompt us all to work together to accelerate the conclusion of the convention prohibiting the design, development, production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons world-wide.

A genuine, sincere commitment to the prohibition of chemical weapons should, in our view, take the form of universal accession to the future convention.

Universality will be one of the political and legal guarantees of full compliance by all with the obligations under the convention.

The complete elimination of chemical weapons and other weapons of mass destruction does not seem likely to take place in the immediate future. It may not

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be achieved in the short term. Consequently, we firmly believe that the inclusion of guarantees in the body of the convention, dealing with the general security of States in certain regions of the world, will do much to help effectively the conclusion of the new convention.

The possession of chemical weapons, like the possession of nuclear weapons and any other weapons of mass destruction cannot but complicate the elaboration of the convention.

The legitimate security concerns of States and peoples and their need to promote their capabilities in the areas of scientific and technical research and co-operation should be taken into account by the convention with all due clarity.

The strengthening of the role of the United Nations as an instrument of peace and, especially, of the role of the Security Council in the Gulf crisis, encourages us to hope that the Security Council will in future fully discharge its responsibilities, with the same vigour, in every situation and under various circumstances, in addressing all the issues it deals with under the Charter, so that it may work side by side with the General Assembly in maintaining international peace and security.

There is a clear need for the Security Council's active role to include also the resolution of other conflicts, particularly that of the Middle East, and the plight of the Palestinian people which has continued to suffer the most horrendous forms of injustice for more than forty-three years as a result of Israel's colonialist and repressive policies which have gone to extreme lengths in flouting international law and thwarting every peace initiative with complete impunity thanks to the indifference shown by certain Powers. The recent massacre and desecration of the holy places by the Israeli occupation forces in Al-Quds are but a reminder of this shameful state of affairs.

(Mr. Ghezal, Tunisia)

The lack of a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the conflict cannot but doom the Middle East region to perpetual insecurity and pervasive violence. This contrasts starkly with the current international orientation towards the settlement by peaceful means of all other regional conflicts.

Tunisia, which rejects all forms of occupation, can only denounce the fait accompli policy imposed by Israel on the Palestinian people and all the countries of the region especially that such a policy can only lead to more stockpiling of weapons and the perpetuation of a flourishing market for the arms trade in that part of the world.

Development, to which the peoples of the world legitimately aspire, particularly in the third world, cannot be achieved under the extreme pressures of armament and the resultant squandering of precious resources.

The World Bank Report on World Development, 1990 indicates that the world total military expenditure in the 1980s reached an all time high in peacetime: it amounted to 1,000 billion US dollars. This figure represents 5 per cent of total world income.

We are disturbed to note that the developing countries which are in desperate need for the investment of their resources in development are a flourishing market for the arms trade. We all know that the arms race, whether it involves nuclear or conventional weapons, and whether it occurs in the industrialized or in the developing countries, can only pose a deadly threat to stability and development.

The relationship between disarmament and development was the main focus of the Conference held on that subject in 1987 and also in the Concluding Document of the General Assembly at its tenth special session. Therefore, there is an urgent and imperative need for us to implement agreed measures in order to attain the objectives jointly drawn up by all members of the international community.

(Mr. Ghezal, Tunisia)

The most recent reports of the United Nations Children's Fund and of the World Bank have highlighted the pressing need to stem the spread of poverty and disease in many parts of the world.

The final Declaration of the World Summit for Children also emphasized the urgent need to ensure a better future for our children.

(Mr. Ghezal, Tunisia)

The adoption of the 1990s as a decade for the reduction and elimination of poverty should call for a resolute commitment on the part of all of us to avoid the errors of the past and avoid having another lost decade such as was the case with the 1980s.

The European and Maghreb countries of the western Mediterranean, are intent upon initiating dialogue among themselves with a view to making the Mediterranean a region of security, stability and co-operation.

In that context, the foreign ministers of those countries have met in Rome on 10 October 1990 with a view to promoting and consolidating relations of co-operation among themselves and co-ordinating efforts to convene a Mediterranean security and co-operation conference, in line with the prevailing climate of détente in international relations. The foreign ministers declared the commitment of their countries to the principles of the comprehensive and indivisible nature of security in the Mediterranean region and highlighted its interdependence with the issues of development. They pointed out that awareness of this interdependence is the only way to promote peace and co-operation in the entire region. They declared that the question of security in the Mediterranean region must be considered in the broader context of international security, that it is closely linked to the security of the entire region, and that in the Mediterranean countries should benefit from the favourable processes in terms of security and co-operation now developing in Europe.

We shall never live in a better world unless military and non-military threats have been supplanted by mutually advantageous co-operation and assured security for all. The objectives of the Charter are still attainable. The will and sincere commitment of all partners is necessary for their attainment.

Mr. LUNA (Peru) (interpretation from Spanish): Mr. Chairman, at the outset allow me to express to you my sincere congratulations on your election to guide the work of the First Committee. Your well-known diplomatic skills and personal virtues assure us of a positive outcome in dealing with the delicate matters entrusted to us, which are closely related to the promotion of peace. The fact that you are the representative of Nepal, a country with which we share common goals and objectives and which also has the honour of hosting the regional centres for peace, disarmament and development, demonstrates the degree of our commitment to the ideals of the Organization.

I should like also to express my sincere recognition of the magnificent work achieved by Ambassador Taylhardat during the forty-fourth session, which confirms the commitment of Latin America to a safer world. Likewise, I should like to convey, through you, my felicitations to the other officers of the Committee and to the members of the Secretariat for their efficient collaboration.

The ideological rivalry that brought about over a period of 40 years an extraordinary arms race and super-Power confrontation is beginning to be supplanted by the initiative and hope of peoples that are beginning to put behind them a sombre stage in history during which they were hostages to a narrow and militaristic concept of security. It is perhaps too bold to suggest that the process at present being inaugurated lays the foundations for a new, qualitatively different stage of history as compared with the one that ended with the revolution of 1989. It is, however, valid and useful to recall here that during that previous period alternatives of a different nature, programmatic and regional, were put forward with the aim of ending the precarious security system based upon nuclear deterrence, that is, the mutual threat of mass annihilation. Alternatives for a

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normative order were sought first to halt and then gradually to reverse the arms race in all its aspects, from nuclear to conventional. The ablest expression of that effort by the international community is enshrined, as members are aware, in the Final Document and the Programme of Action of 1978.

However, even long before that, the non-nuclear and non-aligned countries tried by various means to freeze, geographically limit and morally isolate the phenomenon of the nuclear arms race. It is not mere coincidence that such efforts, although often partial and incomplete, stemmed from a more humane notion of security, directed towards the establishment of policies beyond narrow and limited national efforts that "guaranteed" individual security and thereby enhanced general insecurity. Again, it is not by accident that this criterion - which in the final analysis is the conviction that security must be a broad process directed towards a flexible and collective system having social, political and economic aspects - should be the one prevalent today, after 40 years of obscurantism.

Although none of the steps mentioned have attained the importance and dramatic impact achieved by the present process in Europe, I must recall that they are pioneering elements, if not phases of transition, towards regional security schemes perfectly complementary to the elusive goal of global security. Along these lines, we have, inter alia, the nuclear-weapon-free zone in Latin America, the demilitarization of Antarctica, the zone of peace and co-operation in the South Atlantic, the Declaration of Cairo for the Denuclearization of Africa, the Treaty of Rarotonga and the present transformation of traditionally antagonistic and confrontational concepts into a pan-European system of collective security. None of these efforts or others of a similar nature have reached such a level of liability or compulsion as to render them fully effective. However, they all

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follow a course which rejects weapon-prone options and denies a conceptual and strategic monopoly to the sadly renowned concept of balance of terror.

Ideological and geopolitical conditions, if they continue, are now more propitious than ever before for putting the idea of global security into practice and not merely analysing it in depth. The peoples themselves have decided that their institutions should undertake bold initiatives which link all aspects of security, from personal to global, without eroding, even marginally, the stability of the nation-State in the international system.

It is therefore high time to reconcile the great divisions of the twentieth century, the East-West confrontation and the North-South gap, through a sustained effort aimed at achieving a change of mind that will allow first the visualization and then the channelling of the feeling of belonging and participation not only in family relations and tribal and national ties but also in the world community, menaced, as are each and every one of its members, by various forms of threats to the instinctive sense of security and survival.

We are indeed aware of the validity and importance of all the progress attained as well as of the prospects opening up. We should like, however, to reaffirm our position in regard to security concepts and their consequences in a world still divided by seemingly unbridgeable gaps - especially in the social and economic spheres - that nevertheless can be overcome if a real sense of solidarity among nations emerges, as demonstrated by the events in recent months.

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My country belongs to a region that almost thirty years ago set an unprecedented example by proclaiming itself - on its own initiative and in keeping with its people's wishes - the world's first inhabited area free of nuclear weapons.

However, it is still a region afflicted by serious problems impeding the achievement of the essential requirements for a dignified life. So long as extreme poverty, infant mortality, malnutrition, illiteracy and other ominous realities of third-world countries still exist, security cannot be lasting. It is difficult to explain to a population that daily endures all these calamities the merits of the world's freeing itself from the threat of self-annihilation, when this is not having any effect on the subhuman conditions in which they must struggle to survive.

In this context, I want to stress the innovative concept of security contained in the Galapagos Declaration - Andean Agreement on Peace, Security and Co-operation - signed at the Galapagos, Ecuador, Summit by the Heads of State of Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador, Colombia and Venezuela in December 1989, which has been circulated in the Conference on Disarmament as document CD/1011.

Likewise, the renewed vision with which Latin America is facing its security and co-operation requirements will be implemented more efficiently through instruments such as the recently enhanced "Mechanism for Political Concertation" of the Group of Rio, which at present covers eleven nations: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela.

Latin America has never been a lyric oasis of peace. It is difficult to overstate its social upheavals, historical contradictions and the permanent gap between its idealism and its realities. But the imagination of its sons and the intelligence of its peoples to open up hopeful paths are heightened in periods of crisis and institutional decline. Today, they guide us on the path of a young democracy focused on the strengthening of its social meaning, abandoning

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territorial ambitions and anachronistic concepts in favour of pragmatic attempts at collective security and self-defence against such serious and deep-rooted threats as drug trafficking and terrorism. In other words, Latin America has committed itself to take a less familiar path, to create its own destiny and for the first time abandon imitating a region which, in spite of its brilliant heritage and civilization, has made this century the scene of two immense, pointless and unthinkable wars of destruction and genocide.

When the less developed countries put forward proposals such as disarmament and development, a development fund based on resources freed as a result of the disarmament process, conventional disarmament in all spheres and the control of arms transfers they often met with indifference at best and, in the majority of cases, with stiff opposition. It is therefore ironic to see that some of those proposals which were suggested long ago by the poorest countries are now taken up, reshaped and embraced as their own by regions that spawned the concept of security based on the balance of terror.

Security, then, is not the closed hunting preserve of the developed countries or of those which were preoccupied with the bipolar division of the world. Nor can it be based solely on narrow and anachronistic militaristic concepts. Security is and must be an integral process, in keeping with the characteristics of each region of the world and with the cultural identity of their peoples.

Hence, when Europe began its most welcomed regional disarmament process, it did so because it was convinced that the very existence of its region was at risk by the possibility of an armed conflict of unforeseen consequences.

When Latin America and other regions with similar characteristics took the first steps towards disarmament, they did so with the clear intention of

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restricting the arms race, but the purpose was also to use their scarce resources for the well-being of their peoples.

Here is the basis for the fundamental difference between these two processes, that is, different premises for a similar corollary: security is indivisible, integral and mutual but with different interactions in its dynamics. It is essential that in any process towards global security all countries be aware of and honour their respective identity. The different paths towards that end can only be considered as points of reference and not as a rigid outline to be followed.

This year two important international conferences on disarmament were held. In addition to their individual merits, both are intrinsically linked, for both are pursuing the same goal: to ensure mankind's survival. Peru is solemnly committed to these two processes and reiterates its full confidence in the goals and objectives of both.

The international community honoured my country with the presidency of the Fourth Review Conference by the parties to the Treaty for the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, a responsibility it assumed with the firm resolve to contribute all in its power to strengthen the Treaty, which it considers as both a necessary pillar to halt and reverse the nuclear-arms race and the ideal vehicle for international co-operation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Substantial progress was made at the Fourth Review Conference. Full-scope safeguards, security guarantees, the prohibition of attacks against nuclear facilities and the peaceful use of nuclear energy have received unprecedented support by the Parties to the Treaty.

Although a final document was not agreed upon, these achievements must be recognized as concrete proof of the majority's support for nuclear non-proliferation.

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Peru will not rest in its efforts to co-operate in order to make the Treaty universal and its duration indefinite. However, to achieve this it is essential to recognize that it still suffers from a partial implementation that is likely to give rise to concerns of unfairness, which must be overcome through dialogue and negotiations, on an equal footing, in keeping with the right of parties to an internationally binding legal instrument.

This Committee has heard the statements of the representatives of the nuclear Powers regarding the responsibility of all States in this process. We welcome the fact that the reiterated calls of non-nuclear countries, which have always claimed such responsibility, have at last been heard. We remain committed to participation on an equal footing and in full sovereignty and respect; to that end, multilateral negotiations are irreplaceable.

My country will support the decision of the majority of States parties to the Treaty on its follow-up in the work of this Committee. Our traditional spirit of co-operation and participation is extended to all delegations in order to reach agreement on this matter. Further, we shall reject any unjustified and sterile confrontation, especially among countries that enjoy long-standing friendship founded upon common positions in favour of international peace and security.

Peru has the privilege of being one of the six initiators of the process to convene an amendment Conference of the 1963 Moscow Treaty - a position that is deeply rooted in Peruvian disarmament policy. The delicate and long road already travelled in regard to this matter, which has now led to the holding of the organizational meeting for the substantive Conference, to be held early next year, makes it incumbent upon us to exercise special caution in its consideration at the current session.

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My Government believes - and this cannot be denied - that nuclear-weapon testing is predicated on obsolete doctrines of deterrence and of balance of terror that put the security and survival of mankind at risk.

The States that claim they have overcome their hegemonistic aspirations in the nuclear field are the very ones that would today impose on the international community the ways and means to achieve a complete cessation of nuclear-weapon tests in keeping with their own interests, at their own pace and pursuant to their own strategies.

Similarly, certain countries that pride themselves on being champions of the environment and try to impose international norms, without committing themselves to the necessary technical and financial co-operation, maintain, develop and test nuclear weapons, thus harming not only their own environment but that of areas far from their territory without regard to the consequences for neighbouring countries. This is totally unacceptable, and Peru will continue to condemn nuclear tests, which not only damage the environment but also undermine the credibility of the States that defend such positions.

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On the other hand, we are also deeply concerned that countries which have in common the just cause of the struggle to combat underdevelopment and poverty should have to divert enormous human and material resources to the pursuit of a nuclear security which is unreal. Indeed, it is because of this solidarity which we feel with them that we appeal to them to give up these contrary positions and join the majority of countries, which reject this kind of weapon fever. Peru, along with a group of countries which are aware of their obligations and commitments towards their peoples and the international community, has for a good five or ten years now been an exponent of the view that there is a need for regional approaches in the area of conventional disarmament.

It is ironic that those self-same countries which used to flourish convoluted arguments about self-defence during the cold war are the very ones which today want to be in the vanguard of the regional conventional disarmament processes. Peru welcomes them, and can only congratulate itself now that its ideals have at last received proper recognition: it is patently obvious that the principles of the 1974 Ayacucho Declaration, which was taken up by the 1978 Final Document, are in force; this should be a source of inspiration for other initiatives in this area of conventional disarmament. In proof that the principles are indeed in full and renewed force, the Presidents of Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia, Colombia and Venezuela restated them in the Act of Macchu Picchu of June last year.

It is a source of satisfaction to recognize that important steps have been taken in European regional disarmament, specific measures have been adopted in the Central American peace process and important advances have been made in building confidence in Africa and Asia. We hope that these efforts succeed, as this would boost the process of general and complete disarmament as an institutional instrument for greater international security.

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Regrettably, there are still regions where the danger of a widespread conflict looms larger with every passing day, constituting a serious threat to international peace and security. Peru is therefore fully behind the international community's call for Iraq to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the peaceful people of Kuwait, and for the same reason reaffirms its commitment to all the resolutions adopted by the Security Council on the matter.

Peru also takes the view that the situation in the Middle East requires the international community to adopt specific and prompt measures to achieve the longed-for peace in this war-torn, long-suffering region. For this, it is vital for there to be final recognition of the right of the Palestinian people to a permament homeland, and final recognition of the State of Israel. We think that an international conference on the Middle East, with the participation of all parties involved, including the legitimate representatives of the Palestinian people, is the best way to find a just and final solution. Therefore we also think that the immediate fulfilment of the Security Council's recent resolutions on the situation in the region would be a major step towards this end. History moves on, and there is no way to avoid it or postpone it: our obligation is to prevent suffering on the long road which must lie ahead of any major human endeavour.

There is an intimate link between conventional disarmament and arms transfers. We therefore look forward with optimism to the report which is now being prepared by the group of experts appointed by the Secretary-General. Not long ago we heard a famous Head of State refer to the enormous amounts of money swallowed up by this destabilizing and threat-bound trade, which has the unfortunate distinction of being the most profitable.

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In this connection, we should focus on an aspect which is even more serious: the illegal traffic in arms. Every day, thousands of innocent people are killed or are otherwise victims of assaults and attacks perpetrated by sloganeering groups trying to take over societies by surprise. A sort of ideological smugness enables them to justify any kind of atrocity or outrage they may attempt against the most basic human rights and fundamental freedoms. These poisonous groupings have even gone so far as to connive with the drug cartels, so called, giving them access to huge financial resources so that they can go on threatening and terrorizing societies which are trying, through honesty and toil, to climb up out of the difficult social situation which lies so heavy on them.

Another dominant theme in the work of this Committee is that of chemical weapons. It has not been long since the international community saw with dismay what the heartbreaking effects of these weapons are. Peru's position in this is very clear: total rejection of chemical weapons. We therefore think there is no point in giving the convention that now being discussed a merely non-proliferationist look. Rather, we share the view put forward by other delegations to the effect that there is an immediate need for an international instrument to prohibit the production, use and stockpiling of chemical weapons and the complete destruction of those now in existence.

I will digress briefly here if I may. It is also of vital importance for those countries which are committed, as is Peru, to finally eradicating the problem of the illicit consumption and traffic in drugs, that the international community should become aware that the use of chemicals which are basic to the illicit manufacture of narcotics and other controlled substances is in a way a chemical weapon eroding our societies, corrupting our youth and dragging us down towards a future where the outlook is sombre. It is therefore imperative that a specialized

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international conference should be held to develop a convention to control and monitor the trade in these chemical inputs.

My country strongly supports the notion that we should deal with chemical weapons in a comprehensive manner. We cannot just discuss worries about proliferation alone: this would mean leaving to one side aspects which are all of a piece with the subject of chemicals and their illegal use. For all the above reasons, I find myself obliged to draw this parallel between two scourges afflicting mankind. The problem must be attacked at its root; we must not try simplistically to palliate its symptoms. By controlling, in both cases, the chemical inputs and taxing sales, we would be cutting off at the root any attempts to use them illegally and inhumanely.

The new international climate has given our Organization a privileged place. The ideals formulated in the Charter of the United Nations are at last beginning to become reality. We must therefore be capable of meeting the challenge, and must give this Organization effective tools to banish for ever the option of using force in international relations. In the area of disarmament, this necessarily implies optimizing the various organs in the United Nations system.

Peru therefore supports rationalizing the work of the First Committee. We should use all means to seek consensus adoption of our resolutions. Nevertheless, in this effort at rationalization we should always bear in mind that it is the political will of States to co-operate with each other that is the real touchstone for improved functioning by this Committee. We must avoid a rationalization which, based on doubtful technical premisses, including financial ones, would be merely administrative: this would be a sophism aimed at voiding the proposals this Committee studies of their political content. Consensus cannot be the objective, it is rather the reflection of the agreement, co-operation, solidarity and, above

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all, of the common, shared responsibility which all peoples must assume in building a better future.

The work of the substantive session of the Disarmament Commission in 1990 was encouraging proof of this. Even if the results did not completely satisfy all States, it would be wrong to hold that the success of the international negotiations should be measured only in these terms. The problem should be considered comprehensively, as only negotiated solutions agreed in common will be capable of addressing the challenges we are facing. It is also the case that the proposals adopted for the future functioning of the Disarmament Commission will give it the new life and sense of urgency the present international situation demands.

My delegation therefore finds it paradoxical that, in the Commission's work, the subject which had the highest priority in the disarmament field, namely nuclear disarmament, was yet again made the object of insensitive positions adopted by some States. Here we should recall the words of the Secretary-General of this Organization: "By what right do the nuclear States hold the very existence of all mankind hostage?"

Adopting by consensus the reports on the subjects of conventional disarmament, the declaration of the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Decade, the question of South Africa's nuclear capability, and the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament would allow us to look forward with cautious optimism to future sessions in the firm expectation that we will reach agreement on the nuclear item.

(Mr. Luna, Peru)

I should like to comment briefly on the World Disarmament Campaign. The work entrusted to the United Nations in this field has already yielded important results. The dissemination of ideas in favour of disarmament has met with a favourable response from our peoples. The campaign can therefore be considered successful and deserves the full support of all States. Within a short period, three regional centres for the promotion of peace have been established. They have engaged in a wide variety of activities and contributed decisively to the promotion of the objectives that bring us together in this room.

It is a pleasure for my country, which has the honour of being the seat of one of those centres, to congratulate the Department for Disarmament Affairs and, in particular, its Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Yasushi Akashi, and his colleagues, on the important work accomplished through the Campaign. The task is still in its initial stage and we therefore call on all States to continue to contribute to this noble cause. My country, faithful to its commitments, will maintain its support for this important enterprise. We believe the adoption last year of resolution 44/117 F, which decided that Directors should be appointed to those centres, to be a positive step in the interest of their commendable functions and objectives.

It is the responsibility of all to build a more just and equitable world. Our commitment to our peoples, who have appointed us their representatives, is a delicate one. Mankind demands of us its legitimate right to live in peace, free of the danger of self-destruction. The conditions for paving the peaceful path to international co-operation are coming ever closer.

History has overcome geography, material walls are collapsing and ideological barriers have become obsolete. But the efforts to overcome the tribal instinct of self-protection are hindered by walls of prejudice and remnants of arrogance, which

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impede international creativity. However, today, for the first time, this creative movement is capable of forcing Governments to take their lead from the original mandate of the San Francisco Charter, which begins, as we all know, with an imperative that transcends the Members of our Organization and grants the privilege of articulating a realistic future to "We the peoples of the United Nations".

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.